

Westminster Police Department

PRESS RELEASE

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“EDISON SCAM” TARGETS LOCAL BUSINESSES

On 05/29/12 and 05/31/12, the Westminster Police Department took two reports involving grand theft from local Vietnamese businesses on the East side of the city. In both incidents, an employee of the business received a phone call from a female suspect who falsely identified herself as an Edison Company representative. The suspect informed the employees that their business was past due on their electric bill; and, if immediate payment was not made, the power would be turned off. The employee was provided a specific cash amount to be paid.

The suspect instructed the employees to purchase “Green Dot” credit cards from local CVS stores to pay the past due amount. “Green Dot” credit cards are pre-paid cards that can be purchased at convenience stores with cash and cannot be traced as traditional credit cards. The suspect in both incidents had the employees stay on the phone with her during the purchase of the “Green Dot” credit cards. The suspect then instructed the employees to provide her with the credit card numbers on the back of the card.

After the transactions, the employees found their businesses were not past due on their electric bills; and that no legitimate Edison representative had contacted them.

The total loss from both incidents amounted to over \$5000.00.

Incidents involving the theft of money and property through “scams” are becoming increasingly common. The Westminster Police Department advises businesses, as well as private citizens to be vigilant when contacted by subjects under these circumstances. It is always prudent to confirm the identity of subjects when contacted in these situations.

The Westminster Police Department asks citizens to immediately report such incidents. Anonymous tips can also be reported to Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1-855-TIP-OCCS; or visit their website at <http://www.occrimestoppers.org/>